

# Mount Holyoke

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

### What Do You Want to Do?

An *easy* and *practical* exercise to help you figure this out!

**INVEST IN YOURSELF!!** There are 168 hours in a week. By taking just a little time to do this assessment, you can:

- **Reduce anxiety.** It's simpler than you think. You feel like you are all over the place, but you're not. The goal is to **IDENTIFY KEY THEMES AND PATTERNS IN YOUR LIFE** and to **FIND OPPORTUNITIES** that best fit with your dreams and talents.
- **Save time.** You probably feel like you can do both everything and nothing, and are willing to explore anything that is even a remote possibility. That is like doing a Google search for "the"! This worksheet will help you to **FOCUS ON WHAT IS MOST RELEVANT.**
- **Be a stronger candidate.** This process will help you understand yourself, why you are interested in a particular job/internship and enable you to **MARKET YOURSELF** in a clear and compelling manner.
- **Be happier.** You know a lot about yourself. Use lessons you have learned from your past to **MAKE BETTER DECISIONS** now and in the future!



**Let's get started!**



# Step 1: Examine Your Experiences - Pros and Cons

1. Take a summary of your activities (e.g., your resume)
2. Choose **significant** activities in each area to get a cross-section of your life (classes, community service, major, athletics, etc.). *For example: choose a course, a sport, a position you held within an organization, a volunteer activity, a job.*



3. With *each* item ask yourself:

A.

- What did I **specifically like** about this experience that I would like to see in my next adventure (e.g., my co-workers, the goal of the organization, the location, the knowledge I got to use, etc.)?
- What was interesting, important or exciting about it?
- It can include your noblest and most petty thoughts about each one.
- Write these down on one half of the following worksheet. This is your **Experience Pro** list.

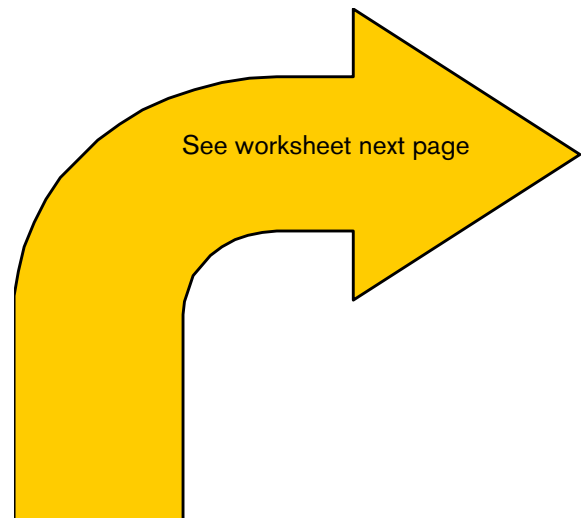
*For example: I liked this position because it allows me to help the homeless, an issue that is particularly important to me; I liked this job because I enjoyed the feeling of making a difference in this way.*

B.

- But, what would I **like to avoid** about this same experience in the future?
- What might I want to learn more about that I didn't the first time? Be as specific as possible.
- Write these down on the other half of the following worksheet. This is your **Experience Con** list.

*For example: working with the homeless is very difficult work and I don't know if I have the strength to do this very often.*

Remember that these are just suggestions of activities for you to choose. Feel free to make extra sheets as needed!





## Step 1 Worksheet: Experiences “Pros” and “Cons”

### Pros

(what I liked about the experience)

Activity 1 (academic course):

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Activity 2 (extracurricular):

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Activity 3 (organization):

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Activity 4 (volunteer):

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Activity 5 (other):

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### Cons

(what I did not like about the experience)

Activity 1 (academic course):

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Activity 2 (extracurricular):

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Activity 3 (organization):

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Activity 4 (volunteer):

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Activity 5 (other):

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#### Example:

*Model United Nations*

#### Pros

-Satisfies my interest in international policy-making

-A well-known and prestigious organization

#### Cons

-Not motivated enough for the amount of work

-I can't see the ultimate results/benefits of my work

Put this list aside—we will get back to it shortly. Go to **Step 2!**



## Step 2: Identify Your Dreams - More Pros and Cons

Let's talk about **your** dreams, and not the dreams of others. This is your chance to reflect on activities, projects, or work that interest you right now, which may give you some clues:

**Envision your future.** This can be something that you have always wanted to do (e.g., your childhood fantasy job!), or it can be any-and-everything that has caught your attention (e.g., something you read or saw on TV). Visit the CDC library or online resources for more ideas. **Do not worry about how real** they can be as **big** and **audacious** as you can imagine. These could be YOUR dreams!



A) Now look at each option more closely.

- Why did this option appeal to you? Why does this seem interesting, important or exciting?
- What made it appealing?
- What would motivate you to do this?

**Be as specific as you can.**

(*For example:* "helping people" could mean staffing a crisis hotline or negotiating treaties for the UN on behalf of indigenous peoples. So try to think of **whom** you would like to help, **why** you would like to help them, and **specifically how** you would like to help them).



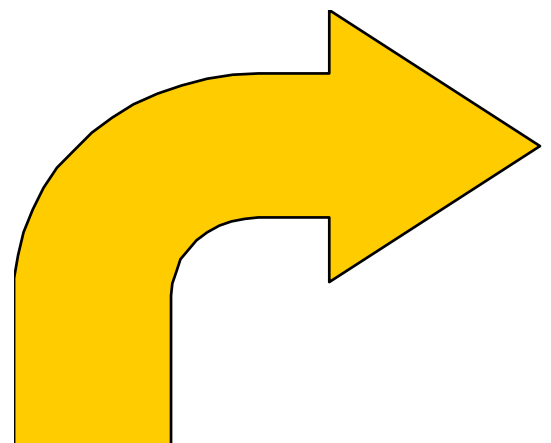
These are your **Dream Pros**.

B) On the flip side,

- What makes you concerned about this option?
- Why? Include everything from your **greatest** to your **smallest concerns**. *For example, Will I make enough money? Am I really interested in this, or just the fringe benefits of being associated with this?*
- What would deter you from pursuing this option?

Be as specific and comprehensive as possible; you can will worry about how it will factor into your decisions later.

These are your **Dream Cons**.





## Step 2 Worksheet: Dream Pros and Cons

### Pros

Dream Option 1:

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Dream Option 2:

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Dream Option 3:

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Dream Option 4:

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Feel free to make extra sheets as needed!

### Cons

Dream Option 1:

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Dream Option 2:

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Dream Option 3:

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Dream Option 4:

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Put this list aside—we will get back to it shortly.  
Go to **Step 3!**



### Step 3: A Brief Look Back!

Great job so far! Now, take both lists from Steps 1 & 2 and look them over together (side by side). Match pros from both lists, and match cons from both lists. Remember, you are complicated, your decisions and interests are not random. This exercise will help you identify ways in which your experiences and dreams are related.

A. What are common themes/interests? Common concerns?

Common Themes/Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Common Concerns: \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

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B. Among the themes and concerns in Question A, which ones are most important to you at this time?

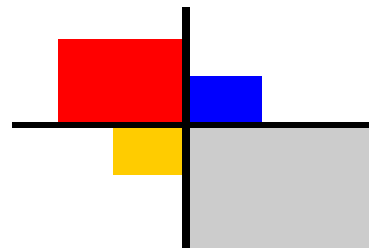
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You are getting closer-let's go to Step 4!





Include everything that matters to you

## Step 4: Putting it All Together

Now you are ready to write out a “job description” for your dream job, internship, or graduate school program. Use your lists from Step 1 (your past), Step 2 (what resonates with you now), and Step 3 (common themes) to draw up a typical workweek.

It’s okay if you can’t come up with an answer to every question. There are no right or wrong answers, but this exercise will help focus your search. The more specific you can be, the better. Try to take into account **everything you need and value** in a job/internship, etc. experience.

### Step 4 Worksheet: Dream “Job Description”

- 1. In what fields are you working/studying? 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. What exactly are you doing?  
What skills and strengths are you using?  
What does a typical day look like? 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Who are you working with? Who are you  
in contact with? 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4. What is motivating you about this opportunity?  
Why is this interesting, important or exciting? 4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5. What type of organizational setting are you in? 5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Your Ranked List

## More Step 4: Putting it Together

Now take your list from Steps 3 and 4 and **rank the items in order of importance**. All of these things are important, but what are the things that you simply **cannot negotiate**?

*For example: I absolutely need X amount of salary.*

Do you have any special considerations that will factor into your decision to pursue this route (e.g., an especially flexible schedule; what others might think about you, pressure from family, cultural values, etc.)?

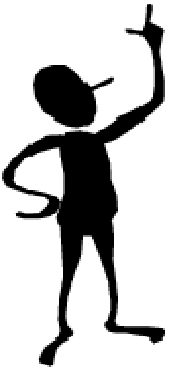
These will not be written in stone, but they are a useful guide to help focus your search and take better advantage of the available resources.

- 1.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 7.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 8.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 9.) \_\_\_\_\_
- 10.) \_\_\_\_\_



### Things to consider:

- What matters most to you... and what can you live without?
- What factors will affect your decisions? (e.g., Would you be willing to sacrifice on some things if it meant earning a larger salary?)





## Step 5: What now?

Congratulations! You have just done a lot of work!

**Remember:** *This is a process, not an event.* It is meant to be a guide in helping you figure out what you want to do next. You are well on your way to getting an opportunity that makes sense to you; one that draws on your past experiences and takes into account what is important to you today.

### Things to do *now*:

- Make an appointment with a **career counselor** to discuss your results!
- Talk to faculty, family and friends in the career areas of your interest.
- Learn more about a particular career area:
  - Go to [www.mtholyoke.edu/offices/careers](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/offices/careers)  
→ Click on **Students, On-Line Resources, Spotlight on Careers**  
(username: LACN; password: clark)
- Identify organizations that might be of interest to you:
  - Go to [www.mtholyoke.edu/offices/careers](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/offices/careers)  
→ Click on **Students, On-Line Resources, Career Search**  
(username: marylyons; password: marylyons)
- Get in touch with alumnae:
  - Go to <http://www.alumnae.mtholyoke.edu/>  
→ Click on **online community or mentoring**

#### *Contact us!*

Reception Desk : x2080 or 538-2080

#### *CDC Hours\**

Monday, Friday 8:30 a.m.- 5 p.m.

Tues, Wed., Thurs. 8:30 a.m.-8 p.m.

\* During the academic year

Good luck on your journey!

